

WAR MEDALS

OF

THE CONFEDERACY

BY

BAUMAN L. BELDEN



GREGORY A. WARDEN



Gift of the
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WAR MEDALS OF THE CONFEDERACY

BY BAUMAN L. BELDEN

On the 13th of October, 1862, the following act was approved by the Confederate Congress :

The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, That the President be, and he is hereby, authorized to bestow medals with proper devices upon such officers of the armies of the Confederate States as shall be conspicuous for courage and good conduct on the field of battle ; and also to confer a badge of distinction upon one private or noncommissioned officer of each company after every signal victory it shall have assisted to achieve. The noncommissioned officers and privates of the company who may be present on the first dress parade thereafter may choose, by a majority of their votes, the soldier best entitled to receive such distinction, whose name shall be communicated to the President by commanding officers of the company ; and if the award fall upon a deceased soldier, the badge thus awarded him shall be delivered to his widow, or, if there be no widow, to any relative the President may adjudge entitled to receive it.

This act was published in an order from the office of the Adjutant and Inspector General, at Richmond, on the 22nd of November, 1862, and a " Roll of Honor " was prepared, bearing the names of those considered worthy of rewards provided for in it. The medal and badge of distinction were never conferred, and there is no record of any medal having been prepared, for this or any other purpose, by the Confederate Government ; it follows, therefore, that what we can class as Confederate War Medals emanated from other sources.

THE DAVIS GUARD MEDAL

For the defense of Sabine Pass, Texas, September 8, 1863. A Mexican silver dollar, each side smoothed off and engraved.

Obverse. The letters D. G. below which is a rude cross of the form known as cross pattée.

Reverse. Inscription in three lines *Sabine Pass | Sept. : 8th | 1863.*

Border, on each side, a line, about one-eighth of an inch from the edge, from which groups of oblique lines extend to the edge. Loop for suspension.

The following three reports, by officers of the United States Navy are interesting as describing this event from the opposing standpoint:

U. S. Steam Sloop Pensacola,
New Orleans, Sept. 4, 1863.

Sir :

I have the honor to inform the Department that Major General Banks, having organized a force of 4,000 men, under Major General Franklin, to effect a landing at Sabine Pass for military occupation, and requested the coöperation of the Navy, which I most gladly acceded to, I assigned the command of the navy force to Acting Volunteer Lieut. Frederick Crocker, commanding United States Steamer Clifton, accompanied by Steamer Sachem, Acting Volunteer Lieut. Amos Johnson, U. S. Steamer Arizona, Acting Master Howard Tibbetts, and U. S. Steamer Granite City, Acting Master C. W. Samson, these being the only available vessels of sufficient light draught at my disposal for that service, and as they have good pilots, I have no doubt the force is quite sufficient for the object.

The defences ashore and afloat are believed to consist of two thirty-two pounders en-barbette and a battery of field pieces, and two bay boats converted into rams.

It was concerted with General Franklin, that the squadron of four gun boats, under the command of acting Volunteer Lieut. Crocker, should make the attack alone, assisted by about 150 sharp shooters from the army, divided among his vessels, and having driven the enemy from his defences or driven off the rams, the transports are then to advance and land the troops.

I regret exceedingly that the officers and crews who have been on blockade there cannot participate in the attack in consequence of the excessive draught of water drawn by their vessels. The New London, drawing nine and a half feet, is the lightest draught of all the blockaders, and has made repeated attempts to go in alone, but without success.

I have the honor to be your ob't svt.

H. H. BELL,

To Hon. GIDEON WELLES,

Commanding W. G. B. Squadron, *pro tem.*

Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. Steamer Arizona,
Sabine Bar, Sept. 10, 1863.

Sir :

At 6 A. M., on the 8th, the Clifton stood over the bar and opened fire on the fort, to which no reply was made.

At 9 A. M. the Sachem, Arizona and Granite City, followed by the transports, stood over the bar, and with much difficulty owing to the shallowness of the water,

reached anchorage two miles from the fort at 11 A. M., the gun boats covering the transports.

At 3.30 P. M., the *Sachem*, followed by the *Arizona*, advanced up the eastern channel to draw the fire of the forts, while the *Clifton* advanced up the western channel, followed by the *Granite City*, to cover the landing of a division of troops under General Weitzel.

No reply to the fire of the gunboats was made until we were abreast of the forts, when they opened with eight guns, three of which were rifled, almost at the same moment.

The *Clifton* and *Sachem* were struck in their boilers enveloping the vessels in steam.

There not being room to pass the *Sachem*, this vessel was backed down the channel and a boat sent to the *Sachem* which returned with Engineer Munroe and Fireman Lum, badly scalded, (since dead).

The *Arizona* had now grounded by the stern; the ebb tide caught her bow and swung her across the channel, and she was with much difficulty extricated from the position, owing to the engine becoming heated by the collection of mud in the boilers.

The flags of the *Clifton* and *Sachem* were run down and white flags were flying at the fore.

As all the transports were now moving out of the bay, this vessel remained covering their movements until she grounded.

She remained until midnight, when she was kedged off as no assistance could be had from any of the tugs of the expedition.

There are now on board this vessel William Low, Peter Benson, George W. Meeker, John Howels, Samuel Smith and George Horton, of the crew of the *Sachem*.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

H. TIBBETS, Acting Master,

U. S. Steamer *Arizona*.

To Commodore H. H. BELL,

Commanding W. G. B. Squadron,
New Orleans.

U. S. Steamship *Pensacola*,

New Orleans, Sept. 13, 1863.

Sir :

My despatch No. 41 informed you of the repulse of the expedition to the Sabine Pass, and the capture of the *Clifton*, Acting Volunteer Lieut. Crocker, and the *Sachem*, Acting Volunteer Lieut. Amos Johnson, by the rebels, and the safe return of the troops and transports to the river without loss.

Lieutenants Crocker and Johnson are reported to have fought their vessels gallantly, and are unhurt.

The rebel steamers took the *Clifton* and *Sachem* in tow within twenty minutes of their surrender, the extent of their damage is unknown.

The arrival of the Owasco this morning has given me the only report from the naval officers concerned I have received.

The attack, which was to have been a surprise and made at early dawn on the 7th, was not made until 3 P. M. on the 8th, after the entire expedition had appeared off Sabine Pass for 28 hours, and a reconnoissance had been made on the morning of the 8th by Generals Franklin and Weitzel and Lieutenant Commanding Crocker, when they decided on form of attack different from that recommended by myself.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

H. H. BELL,

Commanding W. G. B. Squadron, *pro tem.*

To Hon. GIDEON WELLES,

Secretary of the Navy.

Sabine Pass is the outlet to Sabine Lake, which is on the border line of Texas and Louisiana and about five miles back from the Gulf of Mexico. The Sabine River, which flows into the lake, forms a considerable portion of the boundary between the two states. Sabine City was the terminus of a railroad running a considerable distance through eastern Texas, and which connected with another road leading to Houston, then the capital of the state.

General Banks, who commanded the Federal forces in that region, fitted out this expedition with the idea of landing a large force to march on Houston, planning to follow it up with reinforcements until he should have a force of about 15,000 concentrated there.

The fort at Sabine Pass was garrisoned by a company of forty-seven Irishmen commanded by Lieutenant Richard W. Dowling, who was usually known as Dick Dowling. The other members of the company were as follows:

Patrick Abbott	John Hassott	Daniel McMurray
Michael Carr	James Higgins	Michael Monaghan
Abner R. Carter	Timothy Hurley	Richard O'Hara
Patrick Clair	John Hennessey	Laurence Plunkett
James Corcoran	Thomas Hagerty	Edward Pritchard
Hugh Deagan	Timothy Huggins	Maurice Powers
Michael Delaney	William Hardin	Charles Rheins
Thomas Daugherty	W. L. Jett	Thomas Sullivan
John A. Drummond	Patrick Malone	Michael Sullivan
Daniel Donovan	Thomas McKernon	Patrick Sullivan
Michael Eagan	John McKeever	Matthew Walsh
David Fitzgerald	Alexander McCabe	Jack W. White
Patrick Fitzgerald	Timothy McDonough	John Wesley
James Fleming	Patrick McDonnell	Joseph Wilson
John Flood	John McGrath	
William Gleason	John McNealis	

This company was known as the Davis Guard. At the time of the attack, forty-one out of the forty-seven were in the fort, one being absent on leave and five sick in the hospital. In addition to these were two officers, Lieutenant N. W. Smith and Dr. C. H. Bailey, the post surgeon, who, being in the neighborhood, volunteered for the occasion, making forty-three defenders in all. Lossing, describing this action in the Field Book of the Civil War, states that the losses of the attacking party were two hundred prisoners and about fifty killed and wounded, in addition to the two gun boats which mounted fifteen heavy guns. The defenders did not lose a man, and it is said that it was quite a problem for so small a body of men to take charge of such a large number of prisoners, and that when the garrison marched out to secure the prisoners, but very few men were left in the fort with instructions to most energetically patrol the ramparts so as to create the impression that the fort had not been left empty.

After this defeat, the proposed movement on Houston was abandoned, much to the gratification of citizens of that part of Texas, and on the 8th of September, 1864, the first anniversary of the battle, the ladies of Houston presented a medal to each member of the Davis Guard, and to the two volunteers who were with them. Forty-nine of these medals were presented, those members of the Guard, who were unavoidably absent, also receiving them. It is stated that some time later President Davis visited that locality, and the Guard had another medal made and presented it to him.

The following resolutions of the Confederate Congress were approved February 8th, 1864:

Resolved, That the thanks of Congress are eminently due, and are hereby cordially given, to Captain Odlum, Lieutenant Richard Dowling, and the forty-one men composing the Davis Guards, under their command, for their daring, gallant, and successful defense of Sabine Pass, Texas, against the attack made by the enemy on the eighth of September last, with a fleet of five gunboats and twenty-two steam transports, carrying a landing force of fifteen thousand men.

Resolved, That this defense, resulting, under the providence of God, in the defeat of the enemy, the capture of two gunboats, with more than three hundred prisoners, including the commander of the fleet, the crippling of a third gunboat, the dispersion of the transports, and preventing the invasion of Texas, constitutes, in the opinion of Congress, one of the most brilliant and heroic achievements in the history of this war, and entitles the Davis Guards to the gratitude and admiration of their country.

Resolved, That the President be requested to communicate the foregoing resolutions to Captain Odlum, Lieutenant Dowling, and the men under their command.

Captain Frank H. Odium appears to have been nominally in command of the Davis Guards, but I can find no record of his presence in the fort at the time of the attack, nor of a medal being presented to him.

The Dick Dowling Camp of the United Confederate Veterans erected a statue of Dick Dowling in the City Hall grounds at Houston, on it the names of the defenders are inscribed, and under it was placed one of the medals. Another fell into the hands of the Daughters of the Confederacy, and, I am informed, is now in the museum formed by them in the state capital building at Austin. An illustration of the medal appears in Lossing's Field Book of the Civil War, and it is stated that it was from a medal at that time in the possession of Thomas H. Thorwell, of New York City, what has since become of it, I do not know.

Dick Dowling died of yellow fever in 1867, and his medal became the property of his daughter. Some years ago it was obtained by Mr. J. Coolidge Hills, of Hartford, Connecticut, and was left by him to the Wadsworth Athenaeum, in Hartford, where it now is.

The only other medal that I have been able to trace is the one in the collection of The American Numismatic Society, which originally belonged to Private Michael Carr, and was obtained for the Society in 1909 by Colonel Philip H. Fall, of Houston, Texas, at that time the Commander of the Dick Dowling Camp.

NEW MARKET CROSS OF HONOR

A twelve pointed variation of the cross pattée resting on a wreath, in the centre a circular medallion bearing the seal of the State of Virginia. The four arms of the cross inscribed V · M · I · CADET BATTALION NEW MARKET MAY 15, 1864. The reverse is a smooth surface on which is stamped V · M · I · ALUMNI ASS'N. TO leaving blank space for the name of the recipient. The cross is suspended by two chains, of three links each, from an ornamental clasp, inscribed FOR VALOR. Bronze. Size 40mm. exclusive of clasp.

One of the oldest and most famous institutions of learning in the Southern states is the Virginia Military Institute, at Lexington, Virginia, which was founded in 1839. At the beginning of the Civil War the distinguished Confederate "Stonewall" Jackson was a member of the faculty. Among its graduates were five major generals, nineteen brigadier generals and over five hundred officers who served in the Confederate Army.

To carry out a scheme of coöperation with the Army of the Potomac, General Franz Sigel, with about eight thousand troops, started up the Shenandoah Valley, on the first of May, 1864, intending to march to Staunton, at the head of the valley, cross the Blue Ridge from there to Charlottesville, and continue further operations as circumstances might direct.

At New Market, about fifty miles from Winchester, he was met on May 15th by the Confederate General John C. Breckinridge, with a somewhat smaller force, and decisively defeated, being driven back about thirty miles, with a loss of seven hundred men, six guns and considerable other supplies.

General Breckenridge's force had been hastily gathered, and, with the permission of the Governor of Virginia, the Cadet Battalion of the Virginia Military Institute, consisting of two hundred and ninety-four boys, from fifteen to eighteen years of age, volunteered. The services of two hundred and fifty were accepted, the remainder being either left on guard at the Institute or sick in the hospital. They behaved with great courage during the battle, about one-quarter of their number being killed or wounded.

Forty years later the Alumni Association of the Virginia Military Institute, presented a bronze cross to each survivor of the two hundred and ninety-four Cadets, and to the families of those no longer living.

THE SOUTHERN CROSS OF HONOR

Bronze cross pattée, bearing in the centre a laurel wreath encircling the inscription in four lines, DEO VINDICE 1861 1865. The four arms of the cross inscribed SOUTHERN CROSS OF HONOR

Reverse. In the centre a similar wreath encircling the Confederate battle flag, the four arms of the cross inscribed UNITED DAUGHTERS CONFEDERACY TO THE U. C. V. Suspended from a plain bar, on which the name of the recipient may be engraved.

At a meeting of the Athens (Georgia) Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy held late in the summer of 1898, the following resolutions were presented by Mrs. Mary Cobb Erwin, and were enthusiastically received and adopted:

Whereas, It has been the custom of every civilized nation to bestow upon its members of the Army and Navy, and such others as peculiarly deserve it, medals and crosses of honor, such as the Victoria Cross of England, the Iron Cross of Germany, and the Cross of the Legion of Honor of France, and medals and crosses bestowed by the United States Government; and

Whereas, We, the Daughters of the Confederacy, recognizing the fact that the army and navy of the Confederate States have never had such decorations conferred upon them, consider it especially our duty and privilege to supply the deficiency; and

Whereas, Every veteran of the army and navy of the Confederate States "quitted themselves like men" in the "times that tried men's souls," and gave an exhibition of dauntless and unyielding courage in the face of overwhelming odds, such as has never been known in the history of the world, therefore be it

Resolved, That we, the Daughters of the Confederacy, do confer upon each and every member of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States of America a cross, to be known as "The Southern Cross of the Legion of Honor," to be handed down from one generation to another as the most priceless heritage, bought as it was, with the blood of their fathers, and though of no intrinsic value within itself, to stand as a record for all time of the memory of those men who represented all that was lofty in principle, pure in patriotism, and dauntless in courage.

Resolved, That upon those who distinguished themselves by remarkable feats of courage, the cross to be attached to a laurel leaf pin, to distinguish it as a special mark of valor.

Resolved, That it be made a feature of Memorial Day to confer these crosses.

These resolutions were referred to the Georgia state division of the Daughters of the Confederacy and were approved in October, 1898, and referred to the main society for final adoption, which took place in November, 1899, a committee at that time being appointed to prepare a design. The cross was designed by Mrs. S. E. Gabbett, of Atlanta, Georgia, and the first presentation to Confederate veterans took place on the Confederate Memorial Day, April 26, 1900, about twenty-five hundred crosses being distributed at that time. The distribution would have been much larger had it not been that the manufacturer failed to supply the amount needed.

Since that time the Southern Cross of Honor, as it has since been called, has been bestowed upon many thousands of Confederate veterans, and it is still being given to such as are entitled to receive it. In spite of the immense number of crosses that have been distributed, it is almost impossible to obtain a specimen, so highly are they valued by those who possess them.

The American Numismatic Society is fortunate in possessing two specimens of the Southern Cross of Honor, one of which was presented by the brother of a deceased Confederate soldier, who gave it for the reason that he wanted to place his brother's cross where it would have a permanent home, and never be passed from hand to hand, as having a value simply commercial.

During the Civil War there were many small bands of irregular troops operating in the states west of the Mississippi.

Lossing states, in the *Field Book of the Civil War*, Vol. I, page 477, that three of the most noted leaders of these irregular bands were named Taylor, Anderson and Tod, and that they "gave to the bravest of their followers a silver badge, star shaped, and bearing their names."



The badge, from which the illustration was made, was, in 1865, in the possession of Mr. John Ross, former Chief of the Cherokee Indians, who was at that time residing in Philadelphia. Mr. Lossing states that it is the exact size of the original.

I have never seen any of these badges, nor any other mention of them.

There are two small silver medals regarding which the information at hand is meagre and unsatisfactory. The first of these is mentioned in a short article on page 95 of the second volume of the *American Journal of Numismatic* (February, 1868), describing two medals belonging to Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, of New York.

It bears on the obverse the head of Gen. Beauregard facing left. Legend, G. T. BEAUREGARD. BRIG. GEN. C · S · A. Below, the initials of the engraver, C. R.

Reverse. Inscription in four lines, MANASSAS 21 JULY 1861 encircled by a laurel wreath.

Size 18mm. Short die-projecting loop for suspension, reeded edge.

The article states:—"The Beauregard medal, which has the original red ribbon still attached to it, was sold by a Confederate soldier in New York. It is one of a number presented by the city of New Orleans immediately after the first battle of Bull Run."

The other medal is of the same size, has a similar loop and edge, and is by the same engraver. The obverse bears the head of Jefferson Davis facing left. Legend, JEFFERSON DAVIS below, C. R.

Reverse. Legend, C S A FIRST PRESIDENT. In centre, 1861, encircled by a laurel wreath.

These two medals are described and illustrated in the catalogue of the collection of Benjamin Betts (Nos. 393 and 394), sold by Lyman H. Low, January 11 and 12, 1898.

While they were undoubtedly struck either during the Civil War, or shortly after it, I doubt exceedingly if they were ever awarded to Confederate soldiers. They may have been, but I think it is more likely that they were struck as commemorative souvenirs. A little more definite light on their history would be of much interest.

A specimen of the Davis medal is in the collection of The American Numismatic Society; the Beauregard medal I have never seen.

There are a number of badges of Confederate Veteran Societies, that are of much interest, though their description would be out of place in this paper, but even with these, and including medals of reunions and anniversaries, there are but few medallic memorials left to tell us of "the lost cause."



THE DAVIS GUARD MEDAL



NEW MARKET CROSS OF HONOR



THE SOUTHERN CROSS OF HONOR

WAR MEDALS OF THE CONFEDERACY

NOTES

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